Rural Business Hubs

3554. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are planning to set up rural business hubs in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what measures are being taken to establish linkage between panchayats and industry; and

(d) what measures are being taken for computerization of panchayats?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Confederation of Indian Industries (CM) are working together to facilitate building linkages between Panchayats, industries and businesses to create Rural Business Hubs (RBH) in different blocks of the country on the lines of the successful Thai experience of One Tambon One Product (OTOP). Rural Business Hubs are proposed to be Public-Private-Panchayat Partnerships to produce/improve/refine goods from locally available resources to enable larger market access.

The Union Government with the help of State Governments, Panchayats, the Confederation of Indian Industries (CM) and other similar organizations, has identified 846 potential products and the blocks in which Rural Business Hubs (RBH) will be promoted on the basis of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between key stakeholders for ensuring development of the RBH in a set time frame, covering every facet of product development, ensuring quality, value addition, market access and securing better prices. Under the Rural Business Hubs initiative, 31 MOUs have so far been signed between Panchayats and Corporates in the public and private sectors and 73 business houses located by the Cll have expressed their interests in further exploring the prospects for specific RBH.

The State specific lists of identified potential RBHs and expression of interests of companies have been forwarded to the State Governments concerned for arranging interaction and exchange of ideas between the Panchayats and the corporate or promotional bodies and for facilitating

the finalization of Memoranda of Understanding between stakeholders for setting up RBHs. A joint RBH Council, comprising representatives of the Government, Cll and eminent individuals working in this area, has been constituted for monitoring the process and reviewing the actions.

(d) Ministry of Panchayati Raj is working on a scheme for computerization of Panchayats under the National e-Governance Plan in close coordination with the Planning Commission, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. In consultation with this Ministry, State-Governments are to take into account their individual initiatives in this regard, as also to understand and fill in gaps, needs and constraints in e-Governance for Panchayats.

Women reservation in panchayats

3555. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the States having and not having elected three tier panchayats;

(b) the percentage of women reservation prevailing in the panchayats, State-wise;

(c) the details of the powers delegated to the panchayats by each State; and

(d) the names of' the States where the gram panchayats are instructed to take suggestion for gram-samsad'?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) All States/UTs to which the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 applies, except Jharkhand and Pondicherry have held elections and constituted Panchayats in accordance with the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution. Those States with population of less than 20 lakhs are required to constitute only two types of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

(b) Article 243D of the Constitution provides that not less than one-third of the total number of seats in every Panchayat shall be reserved for women including Chairpersons in every Panchayats and such seat may be allotted by rotation to different Constituencies/Panchayats at